



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
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APPLICATION NUMBER	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED APPLICANT	ATTY. DOCKET NO.
08/835,419	04/09/97	FRAAS	A

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A3M1/0114

EXAMINER	
MCMAHON, T	
ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER

1312

DATE MAILED: 01/14/98

This is a communication from the examiner in charge of your application.  
COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS

### OFFICE ACTION SUMMARY

☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 7/29/97

☐ This action is FINAL.

☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 D.C. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

A shortened statutory period for response to this action is set to expire 3 month(s), or thirty days, whichever is longer, from the mailing date of this communication. Failure to respond within the period for response will cause the application to become abandoned. (35 U.S.C. § 133). Extensions of time may be obtained under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a).

#### Disposition of Claims

- ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are pending in the application.  
Of the above, claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.  
☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.  
☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are rejected.  
☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.  
\_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- ☒ See the attached Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948.  
☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to by the Examiner.  
☐ The proposed drawing correction, filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is ☐ approved ☐ disapproved.  
☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.  
☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).  
☐ All ☐ Some\* ☐ None of the CERTIFIED copies of the priority documents have been  
☐ received.  
☐ received in Application No. (Series Code/Serial Number) \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\*Certified copies not received: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

#### Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of Reference Cited, PTO-892  
☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s), PTO-1449, Paper No(s). 2  
☐ Interview Summary, PTO-413  
☒ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948  
☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application, PTO-152

--SEE OFFICE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES--

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1. Claim 22 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

It is unclear just what if any process step are being claimed in claim 22 by having the claim depend from an apparatus claim, claim 1.

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless --

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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4. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103© and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

5. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 148 USPQ 459, that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or unobviousness.

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6. Claims 1-4, 6-7, 9, 11-14, 16-19, 22 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Selep et al. (US Patent 4,397,657).

Selep et al. teaches sweeping the coal with nitrogen followed by sweeping with product gas and then with steam before gasification of the coal. If Selep et al. fails to teach any structural element or process step of the above mentioned claims it would have been obvious to add such elements and steps to aid in gasification of the coal.

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7. Claims 5,8, 10, 15 and 20<sup>2/</sup> are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Selep et al. (US Patent 4,397,657).

Selep et al. teach an apparatus and process similar to that set forth in the above mentioned claims but does not teach using vibrating the coal or using ceramic balls to aid in heating. It would have been obvious to a routineer in the art to use vibration and ceramic balls in the device of Selep et al. to aid in mixing and preheating of the coal as these are known methods of mixing and preheating.

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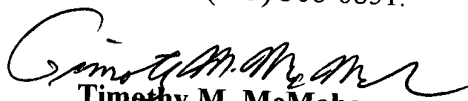
8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Made of record are patents to Johnson et al., Schmit, Dewitz, Mink, Cordier et al., and van der Burgt which all teach preventing air from entering a gasification unit.

9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Timothy M. McMahon, whose telephone number is (703) 308-4030. The examiner can normally be reached Monday thru Friday from 9:00am to 4:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert Warden, can be reached at (703) 308-2920. The fax phone number for this Group Art Unit is (703) 305-7719.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the Group Receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0651.

January 13, 1998  
tmcm

  
**Timothy M. McMahon**  
**Primary Examiner**  
**Art Unit 1312**